

REMARKS

Initially, applicant would like to once again thank the Examiner for the courteous and helpful telephonic interviews he has conducted with applicant's undersigned representative. During such interviews, substantial efforts were made to come to some agreement for placing the application in condition for allowance, although no such agreement was ever finally reached.

Upon entry of the present amendment, the claims in the application the claims in the application are claims 1-9, 11-16 and 18-25, of which claims 1, 9, 18, 19 and 25 are independent.

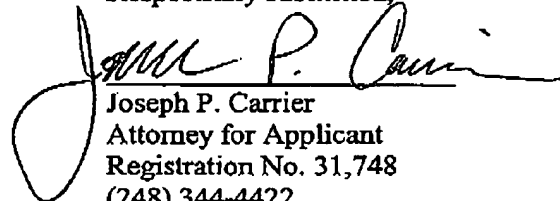
Independent claims 1, 9, 18 and 19 are further amended by the present amendment.

Applicant respectfully submits that each of the claims distinguishes over all art of record, considered either individually or in any reasonable combination thereof.

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

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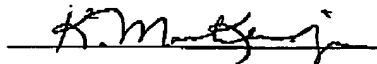
Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile to Art Unit 3618 of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office at the number (703) 872-9306, on December 22, 2003.

Dated: December 22, 2003



JPC/wb